"To promote understanding and appreciation of the religious and spiritual values which abide in the processes and relationships of agriculture and rural life; to define their significance and relate them to the Christian enterprise at home and abroad."

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RURAL PEOPLE AND WORLD PEACE **

By Henry C. Taylor *

Rural people desire peace rather than war because war leads their sons forth to destruction, and because war is damaging to agriculture. Not only does war destroy the crops in the fields when the invaders pass over the land, but it also destroys the normal economic setting of the farm economy. It develops abnormal demands; it results in inflation of prices during the war period, and following the wars there are always depressions during which many farmers must face bankruptcy.

Most modern wars are fought because of industrial interests. Manufacturing industries find it possible to concentrate a large proportion of industry on small areas of land. Agriculture, on the other hand, is a synthetic chemical process requiring the sunshine, the soil, and the air. For this reason, agricultural production must be spread widely over the surface of the earth. Differences in temperature and in rainfall result in a wide diversity in the agricultural products which it is possible to grow in the different parts of the world. It is the natural and accepted thing that farmers should produce in a given area those crops and those varieties of livestock which can be produced to best advantage. It is to the advantage of the American farmers to exchange their surpluses of cotton, wheat, lard, tobacco, and fruits for other nations' products such as silk, coffee, sugar, tropical fruits, tropical fats, rubber, etc. Thus, agricultural people have, as a rule, found their interest in relatively free trade.

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On the other hand, the possibility of concentrating manufacturing industries in small areas had led the industrial groups to seek protective tariffs that will enable them to produce practically every type of manufactured produce needed in a given country. This has too generally been sought regardless of whether or not the article can be produced more cheaply at home than it can be purchased from abroad. The desire of industrialists is to import raw materials only, hold the domestic market for themselves, and export their surplus manufactured products. As a result, one nation after the other puts its tariffs on manufactured imports higher and higher.

The high tariffs disturb the proper utilization of the world's resources and put nations to a very great disadvantage which do not have within their borders an abundant supply of metals, mineral fuels, and other raw materials. The more difficult international trade is made by national trade barriers, the greater the urge of each nation to gain political control of the sources of supplies. The self-sufficiency policies of nations like the United States and the British Commonwealth of Nations forces other nations, which are not so well blessed with natural resources, to adopt a policy of aggression to acquire resources. Our Fordney-Macumber Tariff Act and our Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act have had much to do in sowing the seeds of war. Countries like Italy, Germany, and Japan, which find themselves hampered for lack of raw materials because of barriers to international trade, turn their attention to the ways and means of bringing additional resources under their own political control.

The greater the economic significance of political frontiers, the greater the danger of war. It is the overwhelming significance of political frontiers due to tariffs, quotas, and quarantines, that has brought the world into its present unhappy plight. In the first instance, it has been the industrial lobbyists who have developed these restrictions. The United States is, perhaps, more to blame than any other country, for the continued development of restrictions

on international trade during the years since the close of the World War. We took the lead; others have followed.

The only road to world peace is to be found in international cooperation in the utilization of the world's potential supplies of foods, fibres, metals, and mineral fuels. Rural people have taken the lead in international cooperation. The International Institute of Agriculture at Rome, Italy, created by a treaty signed by forty nations in 1904, is not only the first of the world institutions, but is the only one to which the United States adheres, and the only one which has had a continuous record of successful international service. In a very true sense, the International Institute of Agriculture at Rome is a school for training leaders in international cooperation. The representatives of more than sixty adhering states meet together at regular intervals to legislate and to plan for the carrying forward of the statistical and economic information service provided by that great institution. The Institute is endeavoring to make rural people throughout the world fully conscious of each other and fully conscious of the way in which the agriculture of the one part of the world supplements or competes with the agriculture of other parts of the world. Such an understanding will give rural people a deep consciousness of the advantages which will come to them through world peace.

As evidence that the founders of the International Institute of Agriculture were thinking in terms of world peace, on the east facade of the palatial office building in the Villa Bourgese Gardens in Rome, constructed by the King of Italy especially to house the Institute, one may read the Latin inscription:

"Pace Ceres laeta est."

This may be translated, "In Peace, Ceres (the Goddess of Agriculture) is Happy." David Lubin, an American merchant who became a farmer in California and who, seeing the need of international information for farmers, took the lead in bringing about the establishment of the International Institute of

Agriculture, had ever in mind the importance of his mission to the peace of the world. When, in 1933, the desk at which David Lubin had worked was restored to the office of the American Delegate at the Institute, a bronze plate was affixed to the desk, carrying the following inscription:

"At this desk David Lubin worked for
peace through justice to the farmers."

The inscription was written by Mme. Olivia Rossetti Agresti, who served as David Lubin's secretary from 1904 to 1919. Another evidence of this point of view is found in a document relating to the program of work of the Institute which was presented by the Permanent Committee for action by the twelfth General Assembly of the Institute of 1934. The closing statement reads:

"With those who brought the Institute into being, may we not hope that international cooperation in the solution of the fundamental economic problems affecting the world supply of food and raw materials may teach the way to the solution of the more arduous political problems which may disturb the Peace of the World."

The International Institute of Agriculture takes the lead in improving the basis of international cooperation, not only through its information service, but also through the establishment of international grades and standards for agricultural products. The hope is that a world consciousness on the part of rural people may become a dominant force in bringing about international cooperation in the utilization of all the basic necessities of national life; that the economic significance of political frontiers may be less and less; that the danger of war may disappear; that farmers may continue the even tenor of their peaceful pursuit.

(Note: Dr. Taylor was formerly the United States representative in the International Institute of Agriculture, Rome, Italy.)